

Johnson Offers Haven To Cuban Refugees

10/4/65

Replies to Castro At Immigration Bill's Signing

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK, Oct. 3 President Johnson offered asylum to Cuban refugees today as he signed a historic new immigration bill here in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.

In a colorful ceremony on Liberty Island in New York Harbor, the President signed the long-fought-for measure ending the national origins quota system governing immigration.

"This bill says simply that from this day forth those wishing to emigrate to America shall be admitted on the basis of their skills and their close relationship to those already here," Mr. Johnson said.

Challenge To Castro

Then he challenged Cuba's Fidel Castro to live up to his offer to allow those who want to leave Cuba to come peacefully to this country. About 270,000 Cubans already have found refuge here.

The new law in no way affects Cuban emigration, but the President chose the occasion to respond to Castro's broadcast promise to allow Cubans wishing to live in the

United States to leave the island.

"We will welcome these Cuban people," Mr. Johnson said. "For the tides of history run strong, and in another day they can return to their homeland to find it cleansed of terror and free from fear."

Offer Broadened

Castro offered on Sept. 28 to permit Cubans with families in the United States to emigrate. He made the offer in what American officials described as a "highly propagandistic" speech in which he charged that the United States was refusing entry.

Two days later in a formal statement, Castro insisted that he was serious, and he broadened his offer to include any Cuban wishing to live in the United States.

Washington officials believe that between 15,000 and 20,000 Cubans may want to join relatives here. The officials estimate that there are up to 30,000 political prisoners in Castro's detention camps. Exiles claim there may be as many as 80,000.

"Our first concern will be with those Cubans who have been separated from children, parents and husbands and wives now in this country," the President said. "Our next concern is with those who are imprisoned for political reasons."

The President said he would ask Congress for \$12.6 million to carry out the program. He called on refugee organizations to help process

See PRESIDENT, A6, Col. 1

*Text of President's
speech on signing of the
Immigration Act. Page A7.*

PRESIDENT—From Page A1

Johnson Opens U.S. Gates to

the movement of refugees to Miami and their settlement throughout the country.

After a flight from Washington to Kennedy Airport, Mr. Johnson took a helicopter

to Liberty Island for the ceremony. Afterward, he went to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel for a dinner with Arthur J. Goldberg, United States Am-

bassador to the United Nations.

About noon Monday the President will confer at the hotel with Pope Paul VI.

A few minutes after the

Cuban Refugees

President arrived at the Waldorf, about 100 demonstrators gathered near the hotel to protest U.S. policy in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. The demonstrators were interrupted frequently by hecklers.

It was a beautiful fall day with a blustery wind for the unusual bill-signing ceremony on the tiny island over which the torch of liberty has shone since 1886.

After the signing, several hundred persons jammed around the President to receive pens from his hand. Representatives of many races and nationalities were on hand from this city which has sons and daughters from almost every land.

Mr. Johnson faced the 151-foot copper statue as he spoke. A half-mile behind his right shoulder was Ellis Island, where millions of immigrants first set foot on American soil. It is now closed as an immigration station and is a national monument.

Directly behind the President, a mile and a half away, was the tip of Manhattan Island.

"Today we can all believe that the lamp of this grand old lady is brighter—and the golden door she guards gleams more brilliantly in the light of an increased liberty for people from all countries," Mr. Johnson said.

The allusion was to Emma Lazarus's famous words in-

scribed on a table and within the statue's pedestal:

"... give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

"Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Four Presidents—Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson—have urged Congress to repeal the 41-year-old national origins system, which fixed immigration quotas to countries in proportion to their share of United States population in 1920.

Mr. Johnson called the old system "a deep and painful flaw in the fabric of American justice."

It was "un-American in the highest sense," he said, "because it has been untrue to the faith that brought thousands to these shores even before we were a country."

Several hundred guests crossed by boat to Liberty Island to view the ceremonies. One of them was Vice President Humphrey, whose mother entered the United States from Norway by way of Ellis Island.

Among others present were Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.); Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller, Rep. John V. Lindsay, Republican candidate for Mayor of New York, City Comptroller Abraham Beame, Democratic candidate for Mayor, and Speaker of the House John W. McCormack.